

With 7 Bullets Left

by swiftadmiral117

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Summary: This short WIP is intended to bridge the gap between the levels "Long Night of Solace" and "Exodus". It tells the story of Noble Six in his efforts to Reach New Alexandria after crash landing. He must also deal with the loss of his newly made friend, Jorge, and the after effects of his sacrifice. My first story, please provide cohesive understandable advice for my writing. k thx

With 7 Bullets Left

"Urgh." Noble Six grunts.

His eyes slowly open, revealing a visor covered in dark snow. His HUD blinks back on, showing energy shield drained, a traumatic spiral fracture of his left femur, and a bruised left elbow. A slight but piercing pain shoots up his left side as he tries to stand up, but the weight imbalance is too great and he falls back down.

He turns over on his back to look at the sky above. There streaming overhead is a brilliant purple blue mass, shattered and in flames; the ground begins to vibrate around him as large chunks land out of sight. Smoke and dust lags behind, shrouding the distant stars and planets in darkness.

With infinite slowness, Six drags himself up to a standing position, one arm on his hurt side. He surveys his surroundings; snow-covered mountains tower around and beyond, the dark of night cloaking his still very human vision from seeing anything else.

\_Initiate tactical VISR scan, \_he commands his helmet through the neural up-link planted in the back of his skull. Instantly green light illuminates his view and in the distance there is something familiar; a space elevator reaching high into the sky.

Crash! The ground rumbles under his feet as he whips his head around to see the source. There on an immense peak is the scattered remains

of a Covenant CSO-class Supercarrier cut cleanly in half, flaming wreckage and silvery metal burning with an intense purple hue. A deep thundering boom echoes across the mountains.

Not more than an hour ago he was thrown off from orbit down here, tossed from the Corvette. Jorge had taken his place; he should be standing right where six was. No, there should be two Spartans down here. Because of that damned remote detonator, those wretched Covenant, a massive hulking Spartan is gone. Dead. Noble Six has seen many good soldiers perish unnecessarily in the field; Spartans 3s like him, Marines, Troopers. But he never before saw a legendary Spartan 2 die; he knows, of course, that the Spartans were all marked MIA for morale reasons, but somewhere in his augmented brain he had started to believe it himself. His head swirls, still disoriented by the crash landing.

Six looks around, trying to get his bearings, but is distracted by the gleaming white snow, reflecting that yellow-purple glow. He stutters over to the re entry pack that fell beside him.

\_Hes just another dead soldier. That's it. We all have to make sooner or later. \_He reassures himself.

\_I have to focus, make myself useful. Particularly at a time like this. \_He shudders at the memory; hundreds of alien battleships streaming out of slipspace, turning comms into a cacophony of chaos and the night sky into a living hell. After all the years of fighting, planet after planet falling, and yet again they're here. The Covenant are on Reach.

\*\*2\*\*

Click. Noble Six readies the pistol conveniently attached to the reentry pack. The same pack that saved his life in the long plummet through the atmosphere; would Jorge have still tossed him off if he didn't have it?

\_That should have been me activating the slipspace bomb. Why didn't I..? \_What happened in those troubling moments on the Corvette still confused the iron-hard soldier.

\_He just picked me up and threw me off. He of all people should be here right now. Here to defend his planet. \_

Noble Six limps over to look at the spectacle. The mountain side is consumed in flames and bits of Covenant metal with debris still falling, like an artificial meteor shower. The ashes start to land around him and the atmosphere begins to clear. All this chaos was caused by Jorge manually detonating a makeshift slipspace bomb, sacrificing himself so that his homeworld could be safe. Yet now the sky is covered in Covenant ships, mopping up what remains of the Reach Orbital Defense Fleet.

\_He said he would give anything for Reach, even his life. He died thinking his sacrifice was not in vain. So that the quiet plains and peaceful mountains here would never be subjected to glassing.

—

Looking down at his tactical data pad, it projects a local map showing the location of Human positions on Reach. A city is marked 32

kilometers from the crash site; ground forces are shown to be engaged around this location. It seemed like quite a while ago when Winter Contingency had been declared and the planet was put in a state of military readiness. At least, that's what Colonel Holland had told the team. Kat, as usual suspected something else was afoot.

After the horrible sounds he heard on the radio during his plummet from the atmosphere, Six was not about to turn his comm unit back on and risk the Covenant tracing the signals. The instant eruption occurred as soon as the second fleet jumped out of slipspace; he had seen battle cruisers accompanying the massive bulbous assault carriers. The pre-invasion fleet had consisted of the largest ship he had ever seen, accompanied some of the smallest vessels in the Covenant navy. Their plan of sending a first strike team to knock out communication stations and apparently also retrieve artifacts worked almost perfectly, and we had no idea what they were scheming.

He thinks about Jorge, who would never see what is happening now. \_He died at peace. That's more than I can hope for. \_

Six looks sadly up to the stars, blinking here and there as dark sinister shapes pass over them. He knows Reach will fall. He knew since that massive Supercarrier had decloaked and obliterated almost all UNSC forces involved in Operation: Tip of the Spear. And everything had been going so wellâ€¦

\_There's only one thing for me to do. \_ He turns toward the space elevator in the distance.

\_Better start now. \_

**\*\*3\*\***

"Injuries seventy-five percent healed: Healthpack required:" The notification appears on the visor, displaying an orange-colored health bar underneath the shield recharge. Since the slipspace bomb detonated, Six's shields have been down because the EMP damaged his shield generator. A replacement charge for his armor is needed, otherwise it will be useless in combat.

He looks down at his Tac-Pad.

\_6 hours since impact. I've covered 27 Kilometers, Only 5 left to go.

—

The distant sounds of gunfire could now be heard; sounds that Noble Six was already so used to. Command had designated him a hyper lethal vector, with a tendency to go "lone wolf" during missions. He couldn't help it; He always worked better alone. And then he got assigned to Noble Team, stationed here on Reach. He was sent as a replacement for the previous Noble Six, who died in some sort of botched field op. They were all Spartan 3s, except for Jorge. His own towering height made that obvious enough. But there was also something else, something about the way he acted around other people. It was almost as if he were apologetic for everything, like he was trying to make up for something. Yet he would have had no control over anything that occurred in his past, if the stories about the spartan 2 program were to be believed. In the past week Six and him were really starting to get along, starting to act like an actual team, something that Lieutenant B312 was certainly not used to. But

all that was now lost in the past, somewhere in slipspace; and out here in the woods he is alone once again.

As he moves through the thinning trees, Six crouches down, moving silently in case the Covenant had set up a perimeter around the city. No Friend-or-Foe tags pop up on his Heads-up-display and his motion tracker shows no traces, Human or Alien. His demeanor relaxes as he reaches a small green and rocky clearing.

There just ahead is a small ridge, where the snow has only begin to appear and the last leaves are falling off the trees. Over it can just be seen the white tops of skyscrapers, and other dark blobs seemingly floating above. He walks quickly up to the top to see the city, drawing his pistol as the rattle of gunfire crescendos.

\_They're everywhere.\_

Three Corvettes hold station over the city, raining down plasma and death on the pitiful human forces. As useless AA fire shoots up into the sky and various parts of the city burn, Six notices a large number of civilian transports still docked. He holsters his now seemingly insignificant magnum.

\_They didn't have time to evacuate. They didn't stand a chance. \_He knows the Covenant don't take prisoners. Spartans may have been built to save humanity, but there wouldn't be much point if there wasn't any humanity to save. "Arh." Sighs Noble Six.

Something small drops in his hand; instantly he recognizes its feel, its texture. The dog tags of Jorge-52, Now the only thing that remains of him. Inside his helmet, memories flash of the big Spartan's final moments.

"\_Tell them to make it count." \_

Six looks over the city, clearly in need of some sort of desperate help; a lot more than a lone Spartan with a single pistol. He doesn't know what is happening down in the burning buildings and screaming streets, but resolve forms in him. This is what Spartans are made to do.

\_I'll do that for you, Jorge. \_

He takes the tags, attaches them to his chest, and walks towards that looming hell on Reach.

**\*\*4\*\***

Making his way out of the mountains, Noble Six sees a large number of Banshee fighters patrolling the city. Phantoms hover around dispersing troops as squadrons of Falcons move to engage the massive Covenant air force. Entrance to the UNSC stronghold is blocked by burning rubble and what remains of a wall surrounding the planned city.

Six slides down the side of the last hill, green grass gradually growing brown as he approaches a tower complex. Several skyscrapers burn with vicious fire, as smoke clouds the rest of the city from his view and super heated plasma melts through the ground. There is a

small building next to it, which appears to have temporarily escaped the chaos. Etched on the building in gray letters are the words "WELCOME TO NEW ALEXANDRIA." Six moves from the trees to the open space between the city and the wilderness and dives for cover before any Covenant could see him. He assesses the situation behind a small outcrop of rocks before covering the final distance.

\_I'll go into the city, see what can do. Maybe scavenge a replacement power supply along the way. \_

He turns around the rock and prepares to move-

\_Whoa! Sh-\_

A banshee patrol swoops above, gliding only a few meters over the ground as Six scrambles behind the rock. He watches carefully to see if they noticed him. If they did, they certainly didn't care about a lone spartan hiding in the bushes.

\_That was close. Too close. I'll have to try something else. \_He surveys his position, evaluating the available options.

The sky is now teeming with Banshees flying in circular patterns, occasionally strafing down to rake civilians and Troopers with Plasma fire. Distant screams echo through the city. Although it can't be seen, the sounds of Covenant plasma and Human lead crisscrossing indicates the UNSC is still putting up resistance.

For Six, it's now too late to turn back. His only choice is to sprint it, 78 meters to the nearest available cover, the small building with an open door. His left leg is still hurting, though the pain does not affect him, the injury might slow him down. His energy shield is stripped; if he gets caught in the open by one of the alien fliers the plasma will melt right through his armor and incinerate his body.

\_Well I've come this far; just to stall right before the city. I have to make this. \_

He looks up to the sky, waiting for the right moment, when he hears something in the distanceâ€¦

"Wromp mar rok rok!"\_(I sense a demon!)\_

He hadn't noticed the black armored grunt stumble out of the door.

**\*\*5\*\***

Normally, a single grunt was no problem for a spartan. But this is no ordinary grunt, and Six is completely unprepared for an engagement. He listens behind the rock, waiting for the alien to move. The black armor indicates one crucial distinction: Spec Ops, elite Covenant forces that are some of the most difficult to kill. Six had seen them in a mission not too long ago.

"Blarh arh isunt rey!"\_(Get back in here imbecile!)\_

A slight shiver runs through him; the alien voice is strangely familiarâ€¦ Strange that an alien voice would be familiar.

\_Where have I heard that before? Uppercut? Operation: Nightfall?  
No!\_

He remembers the first time his team encountered the Covenant on Reach.

\_Winter Contingency. Halsey was especially curious about them. Maybe it was a mistake not to pursue that last zealot; it had ornamental horns, an armor configuration I've never seen before. Maybe they wouldn't be here if we had pursued him, as the good doctor suggested. Trapped behind a small cover, he knows if the Covenant discover him it will be mission over, but the regret still purses his mind.

\_No, \_He says to himself. \_Carter was right. We had a priority of getting that relay station back online. He made the right choice. He certainly couldn't have known things would turn up like this. \_

He looks up to the flame drenched sky. A few pelicans fly away in the distance, distinctive blue plasma fire trailing after them. Their thrusters burn hot as they swivel and swing, only for the lances to slam right into them. Yellowish blue and red explosions fill the air with a hateful heat.

Six knows he has to do something. There is a fiery urge inside of him to leap up and smash every last invader in the city. his own limitations bear down upon him, yet still he wishes for some impossible way to stop these genocidal maniacs. He magnifies his motion tracker to 100 meters. No sign of any movement. The distant whine of a banshee drones on.

\_Gotta go now, before they come back. \_

He braces himself, spins right around the rock, and starts running.

\_Arh! \_

Pain riddles his leg, as a thousand tiny icicles sprout through his muscle. The scream of a banshee grows louder.

\_Damn it! \_

Six activates his armor override, allowing him to double his stride as safety protocols are discarded. The pain only increases, the inside of his visor almost seems to glow red.

\_Keep pressing!\_

Gravel and dirt are tossed up into the air as each step pounds deeper and deeper into the ground.

\*\*6\*\*

The world around him blurs out, as the open doorway looms closer in the center of his Visor. His legs stagger and stumble, armor glowing with heat that burns his skin, a tremendous noise suddenly blasts into his ears.

SWOOOOM!

A thundering Banshee slices through the air, just a few meters behind the Spartan; Six makes one final push with his legs and crashes through the open doorway into the building. Dazed, he struggles to his feet, yanking his pistol into his right hand, grasping the white door frame with his other.

Through his blinking red HUD, he sees the Banshee flying away to a distant dogfight.

End  
file.